

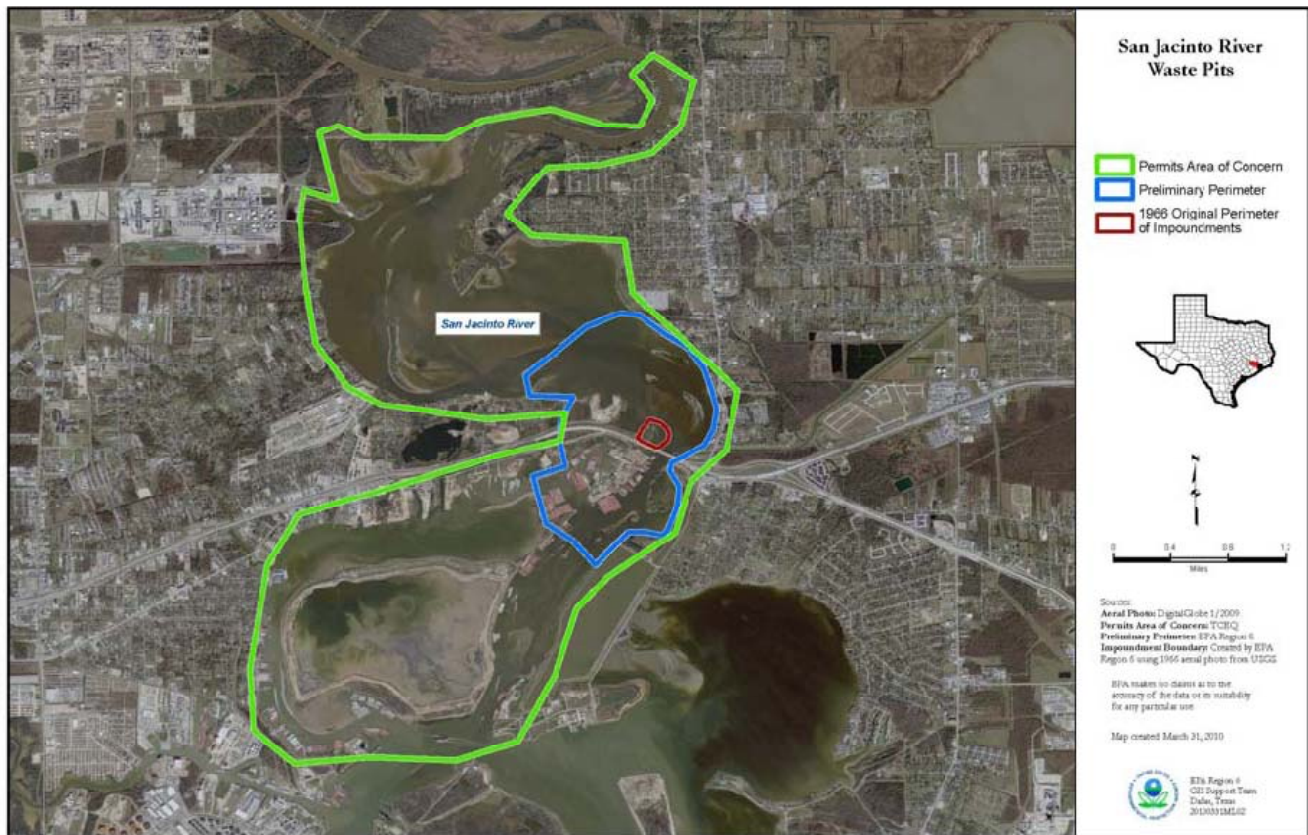
San Jacinto River Waste Pits, Texas

Site Update – August 2012

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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BACKGROUND:

The site consists of impoundments located adjacent to the Interstate Highway 10 (I-10) Bridge and the San Jacinto River and the surrounding areas, containing paper mill waste from the Pasadena Champion Paper Mill. Two impoundments are located north of the I-10 Bridge and are partially submerged in the San Jacinto River on the western side in Harris County, Texas. An additional impoundment is suspected to be located directly south of the I-10 Bridge and is currently being investigated under the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study.

The primary hazardous substances documented at the site are dioxins (polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins and polychlorinated dibenzofurans). Dioxin concentrations as high as 360,000 parts per trillion have been found in sediment samples collected from the submerged portion of the waste disposal ponds, as well as dioxin concentrations as high as 3,660 parts per trillion in sediment samples collected outside the original 1966 waste ponds. A fish consumption advisory based on dioxin is in place on this segment of the watershed.

The site was listed on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Priorities List on March 19, 2008. The EPA SJRWP website can be found online at: http://www.epa.gov/region6/6sf/texas/san_jacinto.

STATUS OF CURRENT ACTIVITIES:

I. Community Outreach

EPA, in cooperation with Harris County and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), will facilitate a Community Awareness Committee (CAC) meeting on September 19, 2012. The meeting will continue to update community engagement and site issues for area agencies and local officials.

II. Source Stabilization

On July 23, 2012, the EPA received a notification from the Respondents following an inspection regarding erosion that had occurred at several spots on the western berm of the armor cap at the site. In response to this notification, EPA conducted a site inspection on July 24, 2012. Repair of the cap was completed by the Respondents on August 6, 2012, following EPA approval of the repair plan. No visible release of waste was observed; however, the EPA has asked the US Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a third party review of the overall cap design and construction. EPA has also requested the Respondents conduct a reassessment of the overall cap design and construction and submit a detailed report about the western cap erosion. The Operational Monitoring and Maintenance plan includes provisions for cap inspection and repairs following future flood events, and material is stockpiled nearby for any future repair.

III. Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS)

The sample results from the Southern Impoundment soil, sediment, and groundwater sampling have been received and plots of the results are being prepared now for review and assessment. The revised Baseline Ecological Risk Assessment in response to comments provided from the regulatory agencies has been received and is being reviewed. The review of the revised Fate and Transport Model Study report by the regulatory agencies is continuing. A draft consent order to include the sampling plan for the River Fleet property located northwest of the waste pits is being prepared. The cap porewater samplers were pulled in July for analysis with the results expected in September.

IV. Watershed Management

EPA continues to coordinate with the Port of Houston Authority, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District and the TCEQ. TCEQ envisions completing the total maximum daily load for Buffalo Bayou with regard to dioxin/furan by the end of 2012 and will put together a monitoring and implementation plan to reduce levels in Buffalo Bayou to within national background levels.

V. Enforcement

The potentially responsible party group continues to conduct the RI/FS under the Unilateral Administrative Order. Respondents continue to work towards resolving the outstanding issue of potential stipulated penalties resulting from prior noncompliance with the order. In October 2012 Respondents plan to attend a meeting at EPA Region 6 in Dallas to discuss this and related issues.